



A  
NEW ESSAY  
ON THE  
SMALL-POX.



Price Six-Pence.

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NEW ESSAY

ON THE

SMALL-POX

BY JAMES C. SMITH

Price 25 Cents

A  
NEW ESSAY  
ON THE  
SMALL-POX.

WITH

A View to preserve This NATION  
from the *Infection* of that *Distemper*.

Humbly address'd to the LEGISLATURE,  
the PHYSICIANS, and Inhabitants of  
GREAT-BRITAIN.

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By \* \* \* \* \* M. D.

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*Magna voluisse sat est.  
Salus Populi suprema Lex.*

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1725



A  
NEW ESSAY  
ON THE  
SMALL-POX  
WITH

A View to prevent This Malignant  
Disease by the Use of the Vaccine  
and to the Use of the Vaccine  
the Prevention, and Cure of  
GREAT-BRITAIN.



TO THE  
HONORABLE THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED



A

NEW ESSAY

ON THE

SMALL-POX.



Very Person is sensible, how fatal the Disease I insist on, hath been these late Years; and perhaps there is not a Family in the Kingdom, that laments not the Spoils of it; which is sufficient to justify every honest Attempt, to free the Publick from such a Calamity.

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I shall



I shall not enter into the Dispute about Inoculation, which is now on the Carpet ; by reason what I have in my Views, is the superseding any Occasion for that Operation ; which, if it could be obtain'd, must, on many Accounts, be preferr'd to the general Practice of it ; and render it more safe in the few Instances, wherein, after all, it may be esteem'd proper.

In order to introduce this Proposal, I think it necessary to observe what gave me the first Hint, and is the real Foundation of it ; *viz. That the Distemper it self is both of a Foreign Extract, and of a late Origin.* There are some Parts of the World entirely unacquainted with it at this Day ; and we are assur'd, one Quarter of it (*viz. America*) was so, till the *Spaniards* subdued it ; when, by the Infection of a Negro, this cruel Disease spread it self among the Natives, and hath now almost extirpated great and populous Clans.

The old *Greek* and *Latin* Physicians had no Idea of this Disorder ; For we have the  
first

first Descriptions of it from the *Arabian* Writers. I confess, we read of Eruptions in Fevers ; and have Reason to think these obtain'd in ancient Time. I know not whether what we term the *Chicken-Pox*, may not be a proper critical Secretion of some Humours in Children ; for they often affect them, without any previous Contagion, and are attended with no ill Consequence. But the *Moors* and *Arabs* (who, every Person knows, by their fordid, nasty way of Living, in a hot Climate, have turn'd common Fevers into Plagues ; ) have perhaps, in the same manner, given that malignant, contagious Efficacy, to those Mild and Natural Pustules.

From this Account of the Case, it must evidently follow, that the Distemper I now treat of, is *One Species of a Plague* ; and therefore both *may*, and *ought*, in the same Manner, to be extirpated from the Nation.

The late Experiments of Inoculating it, confirm this Account ; and, at the same Time, sufficiently demonstrate, how small a Seed,  
less



less than the Hundredth Part of a Grain, will produce a very plentiful Crop. It's true, this may differ very much, in regard of the Soil ; which is a Consideration, in Favour of a Practice, that allows us a convenient Opportunity to prepare the Body, and to adjust both the Quantity and Situation of the Particles, that are thrown into it. But why shou'd we *generally* cultivate after this manner an *Eastern* Plant, that hath made such dreadful Havock among us ? Especially since there is so much Reason to question, whether we could promise our selves that Success, if it were *universally* in Use : For, the Contagion must increase in Proportion to the Subjects ; whereas, on the other hand, when the Disease hath left us, the few who (on the Account of Travelling, or Physick) may have leave to go through the Operation, will run less Hazard in it.

I confess, there will be a Difficulty in overcoming popular Prejudices, in Favour of these Disorders. They esteem them sent of God, for the Sins of Mankind ; which is a pious Account of all our Afflictions. But when this Representation discourages the pro-  
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per Endeavours to remove them ; it hath generally been esteem'd, in other Cases, a criminal Abuse of the Doctrine. This is perfectly the Case in *Turkey* ; where, for that Reason, their great Towns are no more free from the Plague, than ours are from the *Small-Pox*. But I have the Pleasure to observe, that *the Articles of the Church of England* prudently caution us against this Construction of the Sentence of Predestination ; *which, for Curious and Carnal Persons to have before their Eyes*, is there said to be, *a great Downfall*. But I leave the Management of this Argument to our Divines.

When our People are well reconcil'd to the Religion of the Thing, there can, perhaps, be nothing more easy or safe, than to deliver us from the Infection. For, the Substance of my Proposal is but, in short,

*To take the Method, that was insisted on as necessary to deliver us from the Plague, if it had been imported among us ; as we apprehended it might, from Marseilles.*

The Thing is then so far done, that I have Reason to hope, and say, A few Generations hence would enquire, what Sort of Distemper their Ancestors intended, by the Name of the *Small-Pox* ? And when so great an Advantage may be procur'd by it ; there can be nothing unkind, or difficult, only *in obliging the Attendants and Physicians, where the Small-Pox are, to perform a Sort of Quarantain ; to bury the Furniture, and purify the Houses ;* which is all that will be requir'd, and to which they will have sufficient Inducement to consent, if the Loss they sustain by it, is but supported by the Publick. I know not whether an *Office of Insurance* might not be establish'd for that Purpose : But this will be the Care of the Legislature, if our Physicians do but come into the Scheme : They are the only Persons that will suffer, in a profitable Branch of their Practice. But whatever some impudent Quacks may have in their View, I have the Assurance to say, The Gentlemen of the Faculty, upon the Principles of the New Philosophy, and the best Experience, will esteem this Proposal worthy their Consideration. They know very well, that when the Eruption is completed,



pleated, and the putrid Particles have fix'd on the Lungs, and vital Parts, the Event must be left to Nature; for there is little Room for the Exercise of the best Skill: And upon that Account, they must be pleas'd with an Expedient, that will secure their Art from the Tryals, that are vain in themselves, and often fatal to their Reputation. As for the Scandal of our Profession, the Men who have no Comfort but in Filth and Ordure, and are only Caterers for the Worms; I am not ashamed to confess, I have shew'd no regard to their mercenary Ends.

It is to the very Learned and Worthy Body, I submit this Proposal; who will, I am persuaded, at least honourably treat a Plan, that is form'd upon the Practice of some of the Ancient Physicians, the Fathers and first Ornaments of this Science; who did not only consult particular Cases, but *deliver'd whole Nations at once from Plagues*. If the Method I have suggested appears to them as well calculated for this Purpose, as it's honestly design'd; I have no Reason to doubt the Approbation of Persons of such a generous and genteel

teel Education, and whose Business is the Health of the People.

I know, the Fate of this Scheme will depend on their Representation of it; and therefore, by reason *The Royal College of Physicians* are best qualify'd to direct the Execution, I have not presum'd to offer the *particular Rules* that must be observ'd, and that will require the Sanction of the Legislature: It is what, I do not doubt, they will favour their Country with, if this Proposal is so happy as to come recommended by them.

*His Most Sacred Majesty*, whom God long preserve; and *Their Royal Highnesses*, tho' they are now in no pain for the *Princes*, the young Hopes and Joys of these Realms; They have too much Regard for their People, not to encourage every Thing that may make them Happy and Healthful.

And I hope our *Nobility* and *Gentry* will esteem it too much a common Interest, to neglect this Proposal, if there is a Prospect (as, I think, there is a very good one) in this Way of being secure from this Distemper,  
and,



sprout in any Quarter, there will be the greatest Reason to expect, where the Soil is not too favourable, (if I may be allow'd to pursue a Figure that will best explain it to the common Reader) it will be a weak and tender Shoot, which we may easily weed out, and not one rank Crop upon another, as we sometimes experience now.

As for the Time that will be requir'd to accomplish all this ; it can't be suppos'd I shou'd presume to determine it : For, our Physicians know, it was several Years before we were rid of the last Plague. It is sufficient, that the Affair is of so much Consequence, that the Children who are yet unborn demand our Attention to it.

The greatest Objection is from the Prejudices of the People ; who are inclin'd to think every Abridgment of their Liberty, tho' it is for their Advantage, inhuman and barbarous. But in this Instance, I know not how it is ; Persons of Quality and Fortune, and very many of the Populace, are almost come into this Practice of themselves, from their own Observations and Reasonings upon the

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Head. The Husband and Wife, we have seen content to live apart for a Time ; or, if they are determin'd against it, they might perhaps be indulg'd to perform the *Quarantain* together.

The *Jews*, as stiff-neck'd and rebellious a People as they are represented in the Holy Writings, had so much regard to their Health, as to submit to a much severer *Regimen*. For there is a vast Difference between a Separation from Society for a few Days, which is all this Scheme requires ; and theirs, which in some Cases continued for Life.

I can't doubt, the Worthy and Learned College of Physicians, if they came into the Proposal, wou'd take care to direct the Execution of it, to a general Satisfaction : And upon this Account, if the Legislature made them a Sort of *Office of Insurance* ; the Contributions they would receive from the whole Nation, and the Voluntary Benefactions of very many, to whose Families this Distemper hath been fatal, would, I'm perswaded, render them very capable of discharging that Service, by their Agents, with great Applause. I might suggest



gest the Pleasure they must have by that Correspondence this would establish, to observe the State of Diseases and Physick through the whole Nation, and to direct the Practice of it in this Instance : Which last is a Consideration of too much Weight, not to be offer'd to the Publick : For, if any Thing can, it must reconcile every Person to this Proposal ; That He, and his Relations, tho' they are the meanest of the People, (among whom this Distemper generally lodges) will have proper Medicines and Attendance, and become the Care of the most Learned Body of Physicians in the World.

*F I N I S.*



get the Pleasures they must have by that Cor-  
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F. I. V. I. A.

